

## **Flexible Training Options – Definitions & Guidelines**

### **Idaho Master Naturalist – Pend Oreille Chapter**

The IMN Pend Oreille Chapter created several Flexible Training Options (FTOs) in 2014 to accommodate trainees in the completion of their 40 hours of core training if they have timing or scheduling conflicts. This sheet explains the various options. Also see the “Master Naturalist Core Training Checklist” for a visual overview of how all of this works.

#### Professional Chapter Membership (PCM):

Before we get into the FTOs, there is another level of flexibility that the Pend Oreille Chapter offers – Professional Chapter Membership. While PCM is not considered to be a Flexible Training Option, it is an option that will work for some people. PCM is one of three classes of membership available, the other two being Certified Chapter Member (the normal route, with 40 hours each of training and volunteer time, etc.) and Chapter Member (the normal route, but for those with incomplete training and/or volunteer time).

To qualify with a PCM, one must have 5+ years of professional experience or teaching in one or more of the core Master Naturalist subject areas. The requirements (in addition to paying annual dues, signing an IDFG volunteer agreement, and logging in one’s hours online) are as follows:

- Teach 2 or more education classes for members &/or for community education, or lead an approved IDFG Citizen Science project each year.
- Complete 8 hours of continuing education annually in an area outside of one’s main expertise.
- Complete 40 hours of Master Naturalist qualified volunteer activities annually. (Paid work time does not count, but preparation and teaching for IMN does count as volunteer time.)

#### **WHAT ARE FLEXIBLE TRAINING OPTIONS?**

IMN Pend Oreille Chapter will offer core training classes and field trips to meet trainees’ requirement of 40 hours of core training. Trainees are expected to substitute any missed Master Naturalist training classes with FTOs.

FTOs include electives, self-directive study and prior knowledge options. A trainee can replace a total of no more than four core subjects (geology, ecology, etc) with FTOs. Of those four, you can use no more than two each of: electives, self-directive study, and prior knowledge.

#### **OTHER DEFINITIONS & GUIDELINES:**

##### Advanced education:

- This term is no longer used. It has been replaced with “continuing education.”

##### Broad base of knowledge:

- Master Naturalist training must give a well-rounded, introductory view of each field of study. Simply going on a bird walk and identifying some local birds does not qualify. Nor does learning a lot about local game fish species, but not learning about the anatomy of fish, the diversity of fish, or how fish have adapted to their environment. The Idaho Master Naturalist manual (3-ring binder, online or CD) is a good resource for the type of information to study if you use a Flexible Training Option.

##### Continuing education: (These are not FTOs. This definition is here for clarification purposes only.)

- Continuing education is taken by second year MNs and beyond. It includes all IMN training *except* the 40 hours of core education. Continuing education does not need to cover a broad base of knowledge, nor contain a minimum of 4 hours of content.

- The same training activity can be called an “elective” by an MN trainee, and “continuing education” by an existing MN.

#### Core education:

- Core education is the 40 hours of training that MN trainees receive their first year. (All *other* IMN training is “continuing education.”)

#### Electives (or “elective activities” or “core electives”):

- Electives are one type of FTO. They are natural history educational opportunities which replace core training offered by IMN. Electives can include public programs, presentations, lectures, training for citizen science projects, field trips, guided walks, etc. They can be presented by IMN or any other entity.
- The requirements for electives are that they cover a broad base of knowledge in the subject and contain a minimum of 4 hours of content. (Note: Several shorter electives may be combined to create one elective, as long as they total 4 hours.) Only electives that are taken after your MN training has started will count.
- The same training activity can be called an “elective” by an MN trainee, and “continuing education” by an existing MN.
- You can replace no more than 2 core subjects with electives.

#### Prior knowledge:

- Prior knowledge is one type of FTO. Trainees who have a broad base of prior knowledge in an IMN core subject area may opt out of training in that subject. They will give an explanation/justification of their background on the MN Core Training Checklist.
- If you use the prior knowledge option, enter 4 hours on your training timesheet.
- You can replace no more than 2 core subjects with prior knowledge.

#### Self-directive study:

- Self-directive study is one type of FTO. It includes such things as reading natural history books, making site visits to nature centers and learning from their exhibits, etc. Television and other similar media do not count as self-directive study.
- The requirements for self-directive study are that it entails a minimum of 4 content hours and covers a broad base of knowledge. Only self-directive study that is begun after your MN training has started will count.
- You can replace no more than 2 core subjects with self-directive study.

#### Time limit:

- Participants have 12 months from the first day of their education sessions to complete the requirements to become a “Certified Chapter Member,” however, you will be considered a “Chapter Member” if some of your training and/or volunteer requirements have not been met. (Hours must be logged to be counted.)